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CULTURE OF PEACE AND COLLECTIVE VIOLENCE

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I. ABSTRACT

This paper highlights the existence of collective violence in our society and provides input upon fostering culture of peace for resolving the conflicts. It is common mentality of people and the society that the shortest and easiest solutions to any issue can be by way of violence. This mental framework of people have given rise to various wars which have been fought throughout the world. In the Indian society itself, there is mentioning of Mahabharata which was fought between Kauravas and Pandhyas who were related by blood. The war could have been avoided had the circumstances been otherwise. History has witnessed World War I, World War II. For the first time during the second world war, nuclear bombs commonly known as atom bombs were used. It destructed and affected humanity in a way which has it trace even after decades of the incident. The present ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine which started in February 2022, in October 2023 conflict started between Israel and Palestine. Thousands of people have lost their life due to the ongoing situations around the world. The victims of such violence are always the common innocent people. People lose their loved one, become homeless, get injured, die due to the war started by rich people of the society. Violence is never the solution to any problem or issue, rather it makes the situation worse. It brings such harm and loss to mankind and society at large which is irreversible. It negatively impacts the society. This is not an era of war. Peace can solve the most complex situation without bringing any harm to anyone. Culture of peace must be adopted in larger interest of the mankind.

II. KEYWORDS:

war, history, peace, violence, culture.

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III. INTRODUCTION

Violence only breeds violence, while peace can be used to resolve even the deadliest conflicts. The paper highlights the history of evolution of mankind and how violence and culture became part of the society. It is human tendency to construct as well as destroy. In the Hindu religion, it is believed that God is the creator as well as the destroyer. Brahma has been associated with creation and Shiva has been associated with destruction. As per science, the universe our Milky Way Galaxy known as Akashganga and the various other galaxies are all result of the Big Bang explosion which occurred about thirteen point eight billion years ago.

Different religious texts have different version as to how humanity came into existence. The story of Adam and Eve is the most prevalent. It is believed that humans evolved from apes throughout the period of different ages. The establishment of various civilizations throughout the world is an authentic source of human existence. The Indus Valley Civilization is said to be existed during the Bronze Age. However, there is no such explanation which can tell as to how these civilizations came to an end.

The holy and religious texts of Hindu such as Mahabharata tells the story of the war which can be better termed as Dharmayudh fought between the Pandavas and the Kauravas. The Pandavas were five brothers who defeated the massive army and hundred Kaurava brothers. Even though this act was termed as Dharmayudh which was won by Pandavas upon the support of Lord Krishna who himself was considered to be eighth incarnation of Lord Vishnu (God of Hindus) was an act of violence only. The act of violence was the last resort. Peace can take place between groups that desire for peace. War and peace are two sides of the same coin. During the same Dharmayudh the saying of Lord Krishna took the shape of the Holy texts of Hindus known as the Shrimad Bhagawad Geeta. Lord Krishna had also emphasised on the embracement of peace for human happiness.

Our society evolved with time. States were ruled by kings who were known by different names across the world. Usually, the strongest and richest among the group was the king or leader of that clan. His job was to protect and provide for his people.

Territorial acquisition became on the way of showing power. This led to conflict of interests which distorted the peaceful situation of the area. The human civilization witnessed the deadliest war of all time during World War I and World War II. The ongoing war situation of Russia and Ukraine since February 2022 and the conflict between Israel and Palestine since October 2023 has cause loss of thousands human life and has disturbed the peace in those regions. India which was known as Bird of Gold has been ruled by various kings, invaded by various invaders and colonized by the Britishers for over 200 hundred years. In this process there have been various situations where the peace of the territory was disturbed, and the violence was experienced.

Violence is an act of aggression exercised either by an individual or group upon another individual or group which disturbs the existing harmony. Through violence the rights and interests of an individual or group is violated or exploited. Peace is the solution or remedy to the curse of violence. For the development and growth and any society, peace is the way to achieve the required goal. In simple words, the absence of violence and hostility can be termed as peace.

IV. VIOLENCE IN THE INDIAN SOCIETY

Indian society has lot of influence of religion, moral, culture, ethics, etc. Our society isn't new to violence. It has existed and is prevailing since long time. The religion of Buddhism and Jainism flourished and developed in the territory of India and one of its main teachings was non-violence. Violence was so stringent part of our society that it was normal of commit the act which would violate and exploit others. Our society had been divided on the basis of varna system. The shudras were the lowest category among the division[2]. It is also true that the people who belonged to shudras varna were subjected to violence by hands of the other class of varnas. Though there wasn't racial discrimination as such in our society by discrimination on the basis of religion, caste, creed and gender have been existing in our society. This discrimination has also

[2] <https://www.ushistory.org/civ/8b.asp> accessed January 19, 2024 at 13:15;

led to the oppressive class subject to violence by the hands of other so called superior class people[3].

In ancient society some texts suggests that our society was matriarchal. Women had equal rights and opportunities as men but with time our society and minds of people got corrupted. Women were oppressed by men. This oppression also led to them being victim of violence. The transgenders had never been seen and treated as equals, nor had they been recognized as a specific gender until recent past. They also have been subject to violence and violation by other group of gender. Wherever the powerful or rich exploit the powerless or poor, it can be said to be violence. The Indian society have been quite orthodox. The people were very rigid to their reasonings and beliefs and rejected to seek the logic behind the act. Some sets of rules were made on the basis of culture and customs followed since time in memorial and the people's life revolved around these beliefs.

During the rule of Britishers various acts of violence were seen. Though some acts of violence were in order to get freedom of our nation and become independent. When violence is done by a large number of people or group it is termed as collective violence. Violence has no specific form or shape or nature. Sati pratha was prevalent in our society[4]. Upon death of a hindu woman's husband, she was made to sacrifice herself on the funeral pyre of her husband. The widow was administered some drugs or other substances such as bhang which made the women lose their thinking capacity and due to its hallucinational effect they didn't feel the burning sensation. This can be said to be a form of violence in same of customs and religion. Our society was very superstitious, some women were burnt in name of witch hunting on the basis that they practiced black magic to cause harm to others. This was another form of violence in our society. Children were married at a very tender age. The girl child often used to conceive. Death of such girls at the time of giving birth can also be said to be an act of violence. More than violence, these were social evils which existed in our society. It was a form of collective violence.

[3] <https://scholarblogs.emory.edu/rel100hinduism/2015/11/25/the-caste-system-brahmin-and-kshatriya/> accessed January 19, 2024 at 15:45;
[4] <hinduismfacts.org/hindu-customs-and-traditions/sati-pratha/> accessed January 20, 2024 at 18:30;

Bonded labour was another social evil which existed in our society. These people were also subject to violence in name of debt payment. The poor farmers also faced violence. The agrarian violence had led to many reforms in our society. It also became one of the factors for independence from the British Raj. Many wars of independence have been fought on the Indian territory. Indeed, there have been violence then also. But the war of independence was not won on sole basis of violence. The principle of non-violence had great significance and role in the freedom movement. Mahatma Gandhi is known as the father of nation of India and his principles were respected and followed till date world-wide. He was follower and preacher of Ahimsa.

Violence was not a concern just in Indian society but worldwide. Violence also leads to violation of human rights. Human rights begin from cradle and continues till grave. It is inherent to every person since birth. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights[5] was adopted in 1948 to ensure protection of human rights of people and prevent violation of human rights. Many international conventions and organization came together in order to take steps to protect the world from self-destruction caused due to violence. Their purpose was to protect and promote peace. In 1999, the United Nation General Assembly adopted the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace[6]. Every person is born with their human rights. These rights are basic rights which is acquired by an individual by birth itself and continues throughout. There are various legislations passed by the Indian Parliament in light of protection of human rights. These legislations were enacted considering the international conventions signed by India.

V. VIOLENCE IN THE MODERN SOCIETY

A society can never be static. It changes, evolves and develop with time. Stagnancy can cause self-destruction within a society. Many jurists have also recognized this fact. Law and society should go together. Law cannot be read in isolation. It has be framed and enacted in the context of society. With the evolution of society, law also needs to

[5] <https://www.un.org/en/udhrbook/pdf/udhr_booklet_en_web.pdf > accessed January 20, 2024 at 17:20;
[6] <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/285677?ln=en> accessed January 20, 2024 at 17:30;

evolve. Law can't be static. There are various factors which lead evolution of law and society. The perception and ideologies changes. What may be immoral and unethical in one generation or a decade may become moral in another generation or decade or vice versa. For example, few decades back sati, child marriage were part of culture but now they are an illegal act. Law can lead to development of a nation only when it grows with the society.

Though numerous social evils have been curtailed which were caused due to some or the other forms of violence, still various forms of violence have not been yet eradicated from our society. When India got independence, we enacted and adopted the Indian Constitution which was drafted after considering deep study of various laws and rules of other countries as well. The Drafting Committee drafted it keeping in line with the principles of natural justice, laws on human rights, etc. The Indian Constitution is the Grundnorm of our society. Hans Kelsen[7], the jurist of Analytical School of Law propounded the concept to Pure Theory of Law. He believed law should be studied 'as it is', i.e. it should be free from moral perspective, political perspective or philosophical ideologies existing in the society. He gave the concept of Grundnorm. It is the ultimate norm or principle that exist in the society. Its derogation is not possible. However, some scholars are of the view that in the contemporary world there has been decline in act of violence due to establishment of state and various governing bodies to ensure existing of peace in our society.

Welfare of society at large is the goal. The Indian Constitution is considered to be the Grundnorm of our legal framework. Human Rights jurisprudence has acquired constitutional status in India through the Golden Triangle of the Indian Constitution. The Basic Structure is the Grundnorm of the Indian Constitution. In the landmark judgment of *Kesavananda Bharati Sripadagalvaru & Ors. v. State of Kerala & Anr.*[8], it was held by the largest constitutional bench in the history of Indian judiciary in ratio of 7:6 that the Basic Structure of the Constitution of India can't be amended under any circumstance. Principle of natural justice, principle of reasonableness, principle of

[7] <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/lawphil-theory/> accessed on January 20 2024 at 18:45;
[8] *Kesavananda Bharati Sripadagalvaru & Ors. v. State of Kerala & Anr.*, (1973) 4 SCC 225;

good conscience, principle of non-arbitrariness, principle of equality, right to life including dignified life, principle of equity and justice, principle of accountability, etc. can't be defied under any circumstances. These are the basic structure of the Indian Constitution. Our Constitution is a pulsating document. It grows and evolves with society. Law can't be read or made isolation. Law should grow and adapt itself with the society. Society is dynamic so law can't remain static. As per the needs or requirements law must be enacted or amended accordingly. The Hon'ble Supreme Court has also made a great contribution of development of law in our society.

In the past few months, our nation has witnessed various forms of violence throughout. The violence in Manipur[9] is a burning example of collective violence in India. The violence is the result of conflict of interest between two communities namely, Meithi and Kuki. The violence erupted in the first week of May and has been came to end even after six months. Various steps by the central and state government have been taken, still no peaceful conclusion has arrived. The shocking videos which went viral of three women being paraded naked shocked the entire nation and lead to an uproar. The recent videos of two youths being beheaded has stirred and incited the violence again. Victims of such violence are the innocent, poor people especially women and children. It is demeaning and inhumane to harm innocent people for one's own gain. Oppression of one lead to destruction for all. Political parties also has a great influence upon the recent incidents of collective violence in India.

The Nuh violence which occurred in Haryana was the result of collective violence. Violence in name of strike and band by people and political parties for getting their demand fulfilled or as a symbol of protest against the acts of government also causes collective violence. Protests against the famers' bill or Citizenship Amendment Act also led to collective violence. Violence in Jammu and Kashmir against the army or Indian government were very common until recent past. Most of these acts are sponsored and organized by political parties for their own political gain and their

[9]<https://www.reuters.com/world/india/why-is-indias-manipur-state-grip-ethnic-violence-2023-07-21/> accessed January 23, 2024 at 21:15;

policy of vote bank. Spreading communal violence in name of religion is one such example. There acts are threat to the sovereignty, unity and integrity of the nation. Honour killing is also an act of collective violence. Every individual is free to choose their partner to marry. Causing death of an individual for defying the social rules is completely unreasonable. This evil is still existing in our society. As per the recent report of National Crime Records Bureau Report of 2022 which was published in December 2022 titled "Crime in India 2022", there has been rise of crime in India by the rate of 4% in comparison to the year 2021.

VI. PEACE IS ITS OWN REWARD

The ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine is a disgrace to humanity in itself. This isn't an era of war. War is costly and peace is cheaper. The crisis in Middle East countries for territorial acquisition or moral policing or war is act of violence upon people by the State. The invasion and control of Talibanis in Afghanistan by means of violence in another such incident. Terrorism is a termite to humanity and development of any nation. India is a victim of this curse too. The countries which once gave shelter and provided for their development for their own selfish purpose are also suffering because of it. The 9/11 attack on US Twin towers or 26/11 attack on Hotel Taj or Bombay Blast or attack on the Indian Parliament were the major terrorist attacks seen by world. Suicide bombers and brainwashing people to cause harm to another in name of God, religion and pleasure in afterlife are the various tactics of the groups who promote such acts.

The rise of Khalistanis for demand of separate state in the region of Punjab is inciting violence across various parts of the world. Political influence should not affect the territorial integrity of a nation. By defending and providing shelter to people who cause terrorist activities is unethical as well as breach of international comity. Thousands of people including women and children lose their life every year as victims of collective violence. Human life is the most precious. No power can give or return the life which has been lost. The world strives for peace. Peace is the solution to maximum problems faced by humanity world-wide. The violence spread by hate speech also lead to collective violence at times. India has been victim of communal

violence since long. India is a secular country. People of various religions and beliefs live in India. At times the conflict of interests between the two religions especially Hindu and Muslim have led to various incidents of communal violence across various parts of the nation. Communal violence is also a form of collective violence. Religion is a very sensitive issue in India. No religion propagates violence still people come in temptation of so-called religious leaders and commit act of violence. We must remember that no religion is above humanity. We are all children of God. Religion, caste, creed is given to us by society and not by the God. We are all equal in the eyes of law as well. Incidents of mob lynching have raised in recent past in India. This is also an act of collective violence against an individual by a group of people. We had no specific laws to deal with it until the introduction and enactment of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023.

The culture of peace is an essential aspect of humanity that is often overlooked in the hustle and bustle of daily life. It is a way of living that is built on mutual respect, understanding, and compassion for one another. It seeks to foster an environment where conflicts are resolved peacefully, and social justice and equality are upheld. A culture of peace recognizes that we are all interconnected and that our actions foster a shared belief in the principles of non-violence, tolerance, understanding, and respect. It is a culture that transcends boundaries and embraces diversity, recognizing that every individual has value and deserves to be treated with dignity and respect. Through peace, violation of human rights can be prevented[10].

The culture of peace aims to promote harmony and foster social, economic, and environmental justice. It is not merely the absence of war or conflict but rather an active and conscious effort to create and maintain peaceful environments, both locally and globally. It recognizes that peace is not a static state but a dynamic process that requires constant nurturing and development. Every individual has the power to make a difference in creating a more peaceful world. People can take concrete steps to support peace initiatives and work towards resolving conflicts. They can support

[10] <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/udhr/history-of-the-declaration> accessed January 24, 2024 at 15:20.

community-based initiatives that promote dialogue and understanding, encourage peaceful resolution of conflicts, and promote social justice.

VII. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

In the Indian society itself, there is mentioning of Mahabharata which was fought between Kauravas and Pandhyas who were related by blood. The war could have been avoided had the circumstances been otherwise. History has witnessed World War I, World War II. For the first time during the second world war, nuclear bombs commonly known as atom bombs were used. It destructed and affected humanity in a way which has it trace even after decades of the incident. The present ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine which started in February 2022, in October 2023 conflict started between Israel and Palestine. Thousands of people have lost their life due to the ongoing situations around the world. The victims of such violence are always the common innocent people. People lose their loved one, become homeless, get injured, die due to the war started by rich people of the society. Violence is never the solution to any problem or issue, rather it makes the situation worse. It brings such harm and loss to mankind and society at large which is irreversible. This is not an era of war. Peace can solve the most complex situation without bringing any harm to anyone. It is state's duty to restrain themselves for engaging in any activity which would lead to any act of violence. Culture of peace must be adopted in larger interest of the mankind. Fostering it is the need of hour, it would help in resolve the most complex conflicts and would establish harmony in the society.

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